

Department of Human Services

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Senate panel votes to privatize foster care, juvenile justice

3/15/2007, 6:00 p.m. ET

The Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — A state Senate subcommittee voted Thursday to privatize more of Michigan's foster care and juvenile justice systems as a way to help balance next year's state budget.

Republicans said the proposal would save \$36 million in the fiscal year that starts Oct. 1, while one Democrat said it would relinquish too much public oversight of critical programs.

The Senate Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee voted to send the budget for the Department of Human Services to the full Appropriations Committee. Sen. Martha Scott, D-Highland Park, passed on the vote because of her opposition to privatizing more services.

"We're not talking about privatizing government printing or custodial services," she said in a statement. "We're talking about kids, and we can't make mistakes."

Subcommittee Chairman Bill Hardiman, R-Kentwood, said privatizing some services would help make government more efficient.

"We can no longer afford to simply make small cuts, slowly whittling away state services," he said in a statement. "I realize change is difficult, but it is necessary."

Public agencies would continue managing cases where children are living with relatives in unlicensed homes, according to Hardiman's office. Lutheran Social Services, Catholic Social Services and other private agencies would manage the remaining cases, though the state would oversee contracts with those providers.

The Senate's proposed budget also would privatize juvenile justice facilities except the maximum-security W.J. Maxey Training School near Whitmore Lake.

The DHS budget bill is Senate Bill 232.

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Michigan Report

March 15, 2007

HUMAN SERVICES BUDGET PROPOSAL **ADDS PRIVATE SERVICES**

The state would use more private agencies for programs like adoptions, juvenile justice and foster care under a 2007-08 budget reported Thursday by the Senate Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee.

The Senate subcommittees were told earlier in the week to hold off reporting their bills to the full Appropriations Committee, but the subcommittee was ready to move.

Using more private services for those programmatic functions means the budget will save the state some \$20 million in general funds, said the subcommittee chair [Sen. Bill Hardiman](#) (R-Kentwood).

The budget, in [SB 232](#), has a general fund total of \$1.264 billion, \$20 million less than Governor Jennifer Granholm recommended. The budget total is \$4.5 billion, slightly less than the allocation for the current year.

Mr. Hardiman said the state's ongoing budget crisis required legislators to take more dramatic action. "We can no longer afford to simply make small cuts, whittling away at state services," he said.

Under the budget, foster care in the state would be split equally between public and private agencies, while juvenile justice would be almost completely privatized except for services dealing with the highest security needs.

[Sen. Martha Scott](#) (D-Highland Park) blasted the proposal, saying it would close off public oversight of those services.

The budget does add some \$500,000 to help pay for indigent care services, and requires that every child protective services district office have a digital video camera to use during investigations of abuse and neglect.

568 DHS Workers Sliced Under Senate Plan

MIRS, February 15, 2007

Some 568 Department of Human Services (DHS) workers would be shown the door and the state would save some \$21 million under a Republican plan approved today by a Senate budget subcommittee.

Under Senate's DHS budget plan for Fiscal Year (FY) 2008, \$21 million would be saved in the General Fund by essentially turning over foster care services and juvenile justice services to private companies, resulting in the layoff of 568 state workers. The concept is being modeled after one in Kent County that currently handles 100 percent of foster care and adoption services.

"The current budget crisis requires us to look at how state government provides services," said Sen. Bill **HARDIMAN** (R-Grand Rapids) "I believe we must consider reconstructing and reforming our systems in ways that will allow us to continue to provide necessary services more efficiently and effectively. We can no longer afford to simply make small cuts, slowly whittling away state services. I realize this change is difficult, but it is necessary."

Opposing the privatization move embodied in **SB 0232** was Sen. Martha **SCOTT** (D-Detroit).

"Our children are our state's most precious resources, and we should not take haphazard action on their welfare just as a last-ditch budget solution," said Scott. "Wholesale private management of child services closes the door on any public oversight we currently have, oversight necessary to maintain quality care."

Currently, about 40 percent of the kids in foster care are overseen by private agencies.

On the juvenile justice side of the equation, all the state wards that fall into the private program, except the children in the state's highest security juvenile facility.

Hardiman in a release said the services would be provided by licensed nonprofit, nationally accredited private agencies and will include measurable outcomes and performance expectations that will help achieve high-quality results.

Another key change that Hardiman made to the budget was to remove some 257 full-time employees that Gov. Jennifer **GRANHOLM** had wanted added to handle some 3,000 difficult foster care cases, those that typically involve 11-and 12-year-olds who have never been adopted and who suffer from behavioral issues.

Rather than taking that route, Hardiman's version of **SB 0232** provides funding to allow both the private and public sectors to compete. The best proposal to tackle this issue would be funded by the state. Essentially, providers would present their plan and then the state would award the contract.

In total, the Senate DHS Appropriations Subcommittee allocated \$1.264 billion in General Fund money to the budget, \$21 million short of the governor's recommendation. On a gross basis, DHS would be allocated a combined \$4.5 billion.

Other key changes to the DHS budget include:

- Restoring 17 community-based initiatives, such as the Before and After School initiative, Senior Food Aid Program and the Teenage Counseling Program.
- Improving child welfare by requiring performance measures, incentives and measurable outcomes for services to children with a focus on achieving permanency.
- Restoring funding for child protective services to provide every district office with at least one digital/video camera for use during investigations of child abuse and neglect.

- Restoring \$500,000 for indigent burial services and requiring DHS to work with funeral directors to explore flexibility in payment, arrangements and services for these burials.



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Mom guilty of torture, abuse

Friday, March 16, 2007

By Fredricka Paul

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The mother of an abused 6-year-old boy cried during testimony Thursday, expressing regret and saying she wished she could receive the same injuries that had been inflicted on him.

Jeannine Nyies also said she wished she could take it all back, but that was not enough to sway a jury.

The Jackson woman was found guilty Thursday of child torture and child abuse. She faces a maximum sentence of life in prison; her sentencing is scheduled for April 25.

"We are very pleased," Assistant Prosecutor Susan Beebe said. "I feel like justice has been done."

Defense attorney Anthony Raduazo said Nyies did not "willingly and intentionally" abuse her son, but only at the urging of her live-in boyfriend, Ian Anderson, who was recently found guilty of the same charges.

Raduazo said Nyies was a victim of Anderson's "abusive" and "aggressive" behavior. Nyies testified she would do whatever she could to keep peace in her home. She said she was afraid of Anderson's yelling.

The boy testified Wednesday that Anderson hit him more often than Nyies did.

Also Wednesday, the jury heard a recorded interview between Nyies and Jackson police Detective Judy Tomlin. In it, Nyies said the boy's behavior became unmanageable after she told him she was pregnant.

Nyies testified Thursday she punished the boy by making him stand in the corner for an hour, on his tip-toes with his arms straight out in front of him. The punishment came after the boy kept walking on his toes after being told not to do so.

While in the corner, the boy could not keep his arms up, so Nyies and Anderson would spank him and put him back in the corner for more time, she testified. Anderson spanked the boy on his buttocks with a plastic spatula more than 50 times, Nyies said.

The boy testified Wednesday that he had been forced to stay under an end table and had been locked in a basement where he was told spiders would lay eggs in his ears.

After someone alerted the police about abuse they believed the boy had received, he was taken to Foote Hospital, where doctors treated him for large, infected wounds on his buttocks, bruises on his arms and head, and an open wound to the top of his scalp.

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Muskegon Chronicle

Bail set for child sex assaults

Friday, March 16, 2007

FROM LOCAL REPORTS

Bail was set at \$250,000 for a 40-year-old Muskegon Township man who was arraigned Monday on three sexual assault charges involving a child.

Larry Eugene Loomis, of 691 Jones, was arraigned before 60th District Judge Michael J. Nolan on two counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct and one count of second-degree criminal sexual conduct.

Muskegon Township police investigated the case. Preliminary examination has been set for March 26.

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Senate Passes More Sex Offender Bills

MIRS, February 15, 2007

The Senate unanimously passed legislation today that requires criminal history and record checks for all those currently working with foster children and those applying for a foster care license.

SB 0271 would prevent anyone with a sex crime conviction from acquiring a license and requires the Department of Human Services to perform a criminal background check on anyone over 18 residing in a foster home.

The bill also requires all licensees to report arraignments for any felony and certain misdemeanor crimes and requires the Michigan State Police to store and maintain fingerprints of individuals living in foster family homes in an automated fingerprint identification system.

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Child Sexual Abuse More Likely in Single-Parent Homes

THURSDAY, March 15 (HealthDay News) -- Adult men who grew up in single-parent households are twice as likely as other men to have been sexually abused during childhood, a U.S. study found.

That's because parental absences in single-parent homes provide more opportunities for sexual predators to abuse children, the researchers said.

"Children being raised by one parent are at a greater risk for many things as they grow up, including health risks such as poorly controlled diabetes and asthma. We now must add childhood sexual abuse to part of this risk picture," study author Dr. William C. Holmes, an assistant professor of medicine and epidemiology at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, said in a prepared statement.

His team published the findings in the March 13 issue of the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*.

Even after adjusting for socioeconomic factors, the study found that children in single-parent families had a higher overall risk of being sexually abused than children with two parents. The risk was higher in one-parent homes with lower incomes than in one-parent homes with higher incomes.

Holmes noted that parental absence is common in single-parent homes because the single mother or father has to work to provide for the family. As a result, children may seek an adult with whom to share experiences and bond.

"Predators are pretty good at finding and grooming these sorts of kids. They set children up over time, earn their trust, act as parent-substitutes by giving them attention and sometimes gifts," Holmes said.

The findings from this and other studies show that single parents need more support, such as improving their access to quality child care.

More information

The American Psychological Association offers advice on how to [protect children from sexual abuse](#).

-- Robert Preidt

SOURCE: University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, news release, March 13, 2007

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Article published Mar 16, 2007

Child abuse and neglect council receives a \$30,000 grant

The St. Clair County Child Abuse and Neglect Council has received a \$30,000 grant from the Community Foundation of St. Clair County Youth Advisory Council to help pay for the new child-advocacy center in Port Huron.

The child abuse and neglect council also has raised, through national grants and local fund raising effort, \$75,000 to match a grant it received from Citizens First.

The Youth Advisory Council is a Community Foundation committee of students from Algonac, Cardinal Mooney, Marine City, Marysville, Port Huron and Port Huron Northern, St. Clair and Yale high schools. It manages a \$1.3 million endowment fund, awarding grants for youth-related programs.



Teen killer gets detention

Friday, March 16, 2007

DARRYL Q. TUCKER

THE SAGINAW NEWS

Saginaw County will pay an out-of-town detention facility more than \$54,000 a year to house a 13-year-old who fatally stabbed a Saginaw man with a steak knife last year, court officials said.

Today is the first day in a downstate facility for the youth, who pleaded guilty to manslaughter in the Dec. 15 death of Domingo Cirilo, a 47-year-old Saginaw bricklayer, Saginaw County Family Court officials said.

Probation Supervisor Jeff Jacques would not identify the facility or its location, but said Cirilo's family members would receive notification.

Costs associated with room and board, security, rehabilitation and mental health treatment amount to \$150 a day, Jacques said.

Last month, Referee Matthew A. Dambro sentenced the teen, whose name The Saginaw News is withholding because he does not face adult charges, to indefinite detention pending his rehabilitation. The sentence means the youth likely will remain detained until 18 or possibly 21. The conviction remains on his record until he turns 30.

Placing the teen proved challenging because of the combination of his age, the seriousness of the offense, psychiatric issues and a desire to keep him close enough so his mother can participate in his treatment.

Authorities have said the teen used a serrated steak knife to stab Cirilo at least seven times during an argument over a pet dog. v

Staff Writer Joe Snapper contributed to this report.

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Will more teens go to juvie?

Friday, March 16, 2007

By Kristin Longley

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County and law-enforcement officials are seeking to change the Jackson County Youth Center's criteria for housing juvenile offenders.

They say the guidelines are too narrow, allowing some juveniles to walk the streets hours after they commit a crime. And officials at the center said the facility is currently not operating at full capacity.

The issue was discussed this week at a County Agencies Committee meeting.

"The policy needs to be reviewed," said James "Steve" Shotwell, chairman of the Board of Commissioners. "We've got beds that aren't filled and youth out there committing crimes."

Commissioner David Elwell, Columbia Township police chief, called it a "failed system."

The 50-bed center, which takes in court-involved youths, has had lodging criteria for more than 20 years. The guidelines were modified last year due to overcrowding. The process includes an assessment that takes multiple factors into account.

"It was probably more complicated but it does better screening," Chief Circuit Judge Chad Schmucker said.

Each juvenile receives between 1 to 15 points, depending on the offense. He or she may receive additional points for past offenses and aggravating factors, such as gang membership or authority issues. Points are subtracted if the individual has successfully completed a rehabilitation program in the past or for mitigating factors, such as a stable home environment or a clean record.

The individual is detained if he or she has 15 or more points, has committed a violent felony or violated other court orders. If the center refuses to house a juvenile because he or she doesn't meet the standards, the officer must release the juvenile into parental custody.

"Officers pick up kids on the street for offenses and then they have to let them go?" Commissioner Mike Brown said. "This is ridiculous."

The center's assistant director, Patrick Grubba, said the center is open to re-examining the criteria.

Debate over the criteria was spurred in July, when two teenage boys set fire to a Parma ice-cream stand. Less than 12 hours later, they were back out on the streets.

Parma-Sandstone police Chief Jon Sutliff didn't bother asking the center to take the teenagers for the night -- he said they didn't meet the center's criteria.

The boys eventually were charged and sentenced, but Sutliff said they should have been booked that night.

"There were a lot of people upset because they weren't arrested," he said. "These individuals committed these horrific crimes and here they are back on the street."

The criteria were written by a committee that included court and center officials and police officers, but now

some police say the rules should be changed.

"I think we ought to sit down as a group and talk," Sutliff said. "Every incident and every crime is a little bit different than the next and that should be considered."

County Undersheriff Tom Finco said deputies have had problems admitting juveniles in the past, but not in the last several months.

"If they want to relax the policy, we'd be very open to that," he said.

Some officials say police should have more discretion in the decision to lodge a juvenile at the center.

"There isn't anybody that knows the individual better than the people on the front lines, the officers in the community," Commissioner James Videto said. "There has to be more credence put on the officers."

Schmucker said the criteria should remain impartial, but that the guidelines could be revisited after the center's annual report comes out detailing how many offenders have been housed.

"The population at times went lower but I don't believe it's that low," he said. "It's certainly something we're willing to look at."

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03/16/2007

Welfare program helps people navigate job market

JET will eventually expand throughout state

BY VANESSA MCCRAY

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Record-Eagle/Douglas Tesner

Jeannie Kinsman, a participant in the state's JET welfare reform program, sits with JET career adviser Char Slater. JET stands for jobs, education and training.

TRAVERSE CITY — Jeannie Kinsman credits the personal attention from the new welfare reform program JET for giving wings to her job search.

The 33-year-old Kingsley mother said no car, not wanting to work late night shifts and a slow economy were among the obstacles to securing employment. But recently she was hired as a cashier and is working about 30 hours a week.

"They work more with you one-on-one," she said of JET.

JET stands for jobs, education and training. The program replaces the state's former employment and training system Work First and aims to help families attain employment and become self-sufficient.

For Kinsman, that meant help polishing her resume and meeting with a career advisor, among other services she said were more useful than a past experience with Work First.

In January, a downstate JET pilot grew to 19 counties, including several hundred participants from Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Kalkaska and Manistee counties.

Mary Marois, local director for the department of human services, said the program expects most clients to complete at least 30 hours a week of work, rehabilitation or training activities.

It's an attempt to replace the former maze-like program that had many hoops to jump through, she said.

"There seemed to be a lot of responsibility on the client alone to walk through an employment and training process," Marois said.

JET will provide more support for clients through the resources of several state departments.

Marois said the new program also will place higher expectations on clients who previously might be exempt from employment requirements. Those with a "perceived disability" may go through rehabilitation so that they can work again, she said. JET also places tougher sanctions on those who don't follow the program.

"Self-sufficiency is the goal, so graduation from the JET program is defined as ... not getting cash assistance from the welfare program," Marois said.

Clients of the state's Family Independence Program, which provides cash assistance to families with children, will be required to participate in JET. The program will run statewide by this fall.

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THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

Empty Bowls soup supper brings in \$12,000 for Gleaners

Participation down, but donations up for annual Pinckney charity event

Friday, March 16, 2007

BY LEANNE SMITH

News Staff Reporter

Attendance at Pinckney's Empty Bowls Dinner was down this year, but those who attended the March 8 event dug deeper into their pockets to keep donations to Gleaners Community Food Bank of Livingston and its Shared Harvest Pantry on par with last year.

The simple soup supper in the Pinckney Community High School commons was attended by about 850 people, down from 1,400 a year ago, said Erica Karfonta, director of operations for the food bank. But contributions came in roughly the same as last year at \$12,000, due to an increase in direct donations and funds brought in during a silent art auction, she said.

"We are very thankful to Pinckney Community Schools, its art teachers and all the residents of the community who continue to come out and support this wonderful event," Karfonta said.

The number of people who need assistance continues to increase, Karfonta said, and the county food bank has a \$150,000 funding gap it hopes donations from local residents and groups will help it overcome.

"We're probably halfway to our target, but donations typically go down in the spring," Karfonta said. "One hundred percent of the funds needed to make up this gap will go directly to food costs."

In its 14 years, Pinckney's Empty Bowls dinner has raised more than \$112,000 for Gleaners.

Nearly three dozen area restaurants donate upwards of 300 gallons of their homemade soups for the supper. A local business exposition, performances from student actors and a silent art auction also are part of the event.

Anyone wishing to donate can send checks, made out to Gleaners Community Food Bank of Livingston, directly to the food bank at 5924 Sterling Drive, Howell, MI 48843. For more details, call toll-free at 866-453-2637, ext. 335.

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Michigan Report

March 15, 2007

TRIANGLE PROJECT TO OPEN IN 2009

Despite harsh criticism from some Republicans, the proposed new headquarters for the Department of State Police won relatively easy, bipartisan approval Thursday from the Joint Capital Outlay Committee.

The project, which has seen a number of iterations and various levels of support across two administrations, would be 140,000 square feet of office space and cost \$4.9 million a year beginning in the 2008-09 fiscal year. The committee approved the expenditure on a 14-3-3 vote.

Though the committee held off its vote for a week for members to have questions answered about the project, [Sen. Cameron Brown](#) (R-Fawn River Twp.) complained there had been no actual testimony on the project. He and other Republicans were particularly concerned that there had been no direct input from the State Police.

“I’ve been told that the State Police are in favor. I’ve found no evidence of that,” Mr. Brown said.

He said his visit to the current headquarters also did not reveal the repair problems officials have listed as one of the reasons for needing the new building. Michigan State University, which owns the land on which the current headquarters sits, has also asked to end the current lease before it expires in 2030.

“Whether their building is in good shape, you’re not an expert on that,” said committee Chair [Rep. Morris Hood III](#) (D-Detroit) of Mr. Brown’s assertions. He then denied Mr. Brown’s request to respond, citing time concerns.

Terry Fitzpatrick, director of the Department of Management and Budget’s real estate division, said the current building needs some \$2.5 million in repairs. And State Police officials have complained in the past that the construction of the building makes it difficult to upgrade to meet new technology needs.

Ms. Fitzpatrick said the new building would also eliminate about \$2.5 million in current lease payments, including more than \$1.2 million on a facility on Collins Road in Lansing that houses the Office of Highway Safety Planning, the Motor Vehicle Division and the Investigations Division.

Only the emergency management center would not move from the Collins Road facility to the new downtown facility, and DMB spokesperson Ed Woods said the costs for relocating that could be borne by federal homeland security grants. Though a site for the facility has not been named, he said it would be on existing state property.

Mr. Woods argued the building would also been an economic boon to the state and the Lansing area, creating 540 construction jobs and generating \$2.2 million in state revenue and \$28.5 million personal income.

Once the contract is approved by the State Administrative Board, the building is expected to be ready in 21 months, Mr. Woods said.



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING



MARIANNE UDOW
DIRECTOR

News Release

Contact: Maureen Sorbet or Karen Stock (517) 373-7394

Welfare reform program will put people back to work and help Northwest Michigan families achieve self-sufficiency

March 16, 2007

TRAVERSE CITY – Grand Traverse/Leelanau County Department of Human Services (DHS) Director Mary Marois and Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG) Manager Brian Marcotte today showcased the expanded Jobs, Education and Training (JET) welfare reform program that will help Northwest Michigan families secure long-term employment and become self-sufficient.

Beginning in September 2004, a broad-based welfare reform work group developed a new approach to creating permanent work force status for DHS clients. JET grew out of this work group and pilot programs in Kent, Oakland, Sanilac and Wayne counties were included in the fiscal year 2006 DHS budget. A net savings of \$16 million is forecast for fiscal year 2007. The program will cost approximately \$40 million to implement, but is expected to result in \$56 million in grant savings. Preliminary results in the four pilot locations show that caseloads are holding steady or slightly declining. In areas that did not offer JET, there was a 5 percent increase.

JET expanded to serve 19 counties into 2007 and will help Michigan meet new federal work participation requirements. The expansion includes the Northwest Michigan counties of Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Kalkaska and Manistee. The program is a cooperative venture between the departments of Human Services and Labor and Economic Growth, Michigan Works! Agencies and Michigan Rehabilitation Services.

"JET fundamentally changes the way we move families off welfare and toward self-sufficiency," DHS Director Marianne Udow said. "The program supports them in developing job skills and moving permanently to self-sufficiency."

JET is a win-win-win for Michigan. For welfare recipients, it's an opportunity to qualify for - and keep - good paying jobs. For Michigan's businesses, JET is supporting the workforce and skill needs they have today and for the future. For the state, it means more Michigan residents gaining their independence in good jobs and leaving the welfare roles and contributing to the tax base again.

"The JET initiative is just one example of Governor Jennifer Granholm's efforts to promote economic development and increase jobs to transform Michigan's economy," said Brian Marcotte, manager of DLEG's Bureau of Workforce Programs Welfare Reform Section. "Her economic plan has been set in motion and it's beginning to work to attract new businesses and diversify our economy. The governor is continually improving our business climate to make our state more attractive to businesses so they'll locate and expand and create jobs here."

The JET program:

- Uses a thorough up-front assessment and Family Self-Sufficiency Plan to tailor supports and services to the individual circumstances of recipient and family.

-MORE-

- Expands educational and training opportunities so clients gain the skills they need to get a good paying job in high-demand fields.
- Focuses career and technical training opportunities on jobs the Michigan economy has available (e.g., health care, construction).
- Provides supportive services when clients face serious barriers to work, with the goal of reducing and removing those barriers so clients can participate in work or work preparation.
- Provides advocacy and support for those who are making application for Supplemental Security Income.
- Extends post-employment support from 90 days to 180 days to help clients retain jobs and prepare a plan for advancement.

“The welfare reform plan will meet federal work participation requirements within the federal time frame, protect the safety net and help people become permanently attached to the labor force so they can move their families out of poverty,” Udow said. “Self-sufficiency is better for families, and what is better for families is better for children.”

For more information about JET go to www.michigan.gov/jet

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